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[423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvée, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction of the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

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794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of the church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

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In the new courts established by the central government in the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

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How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda - Palasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Palashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Palashas and believe that Palasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passerby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces [77] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Among the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

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While the aforementioned dabbara is the most commonly called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through
the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the
buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to
leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the
person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made
to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually
cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tanqway" as
a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable dābtāra
and also the woggeha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyān") and the diviner ("tanqway")

756 While the aforementioned tanqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the
exercising of "ganyān" evil spirits who have a very different
character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tanqway occupies the lowest
social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in
fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical
with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as
throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tanqway diviner and the ganyān
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one
of geographical orientation. For the ganyān, considered inferior
to sar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies.
The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn",
local evil genies, though actually derived from the Gees "janyen"),
and the concept is also similar: most ganyān are either water-
spirits or fire-spirits.

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Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

- *121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and *laissez faire*, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.
- [642] The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.
- [466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of *corvée* labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the barbs of public opinion.
- *121 641 701 702 714 The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.
- *121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly